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LETTER DATED 21 FEBRUARY 2000 FROM THE CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF YUGOSLAVIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have been instructed by my Government to draw your attention to a new dramatic deterioration of the situation in Kosovska Mitrovica, a town in Kosovo and Metohija, the autonomous province of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia.

Several thousands of ethnic Albanians from Kosovska Mitrovica, led by terrorists of the so-called "Kosovo Liberation Army" ("KLA"), tried to cross the Ibar river bridge today into the northern part of the city populated mainly by the Serbs. Meanwhile, many more thousands of ethnic Albanians left Pristina for Kosovska Mitrovica to join them.

It is obvious that a concentrated attack has been planned to drive Serbs, Montenegrins, Goranci, Slav Muslims and Turks out of Kosovska Mitrovica, the only remaining multi-ethnic and multi-religious community in Kosovo and Metohija and complete the process of the ethnic cleansing of non-Albanians who now live in isolated enclaves in this Serbian province.

In my letters of 13 January 2000 (S/2000/19), 14 January 2000 (S/2000/25), 19 January 2000 (S/2000/41), 3 February 2000 (S/2000/86), 11 February 2000 (S/2000/110) and 13 February 2000 (S/2000/111), I conveyed to the Security Council the concern of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia at the failure of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) and the United Nations Interim Administration in Kosovo (UNMIK) to carry out their obligations under Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) of 10 June 2000 and the Military-Technical Agreement and called on it to take urgent and resolute measures to prevent a further aggravation of the already difficult situation. However, notwithstanding the fact that the majority of Serbs and other non-Albanians have already been expelled from Kosovo and Metohija, most of them in the presence of the international presences, KFOR and UNMIK have not only done nothing to put an end to ethnic Albanian terror and vandalism, calculated to intimidate Serbs and other non-Albanians and force them to leave the province, but have often been accomplices in these nefarious practices.

The latest deterioration of the situation has been brought about by the unbecoming, uncalled-for and arrogant behaviour of KFOR towards Serbs in

Kosovska Mitrovica on 20 February 2000. Under the pretext of looking for hidden arms that the Serbs had allegedly refused to hand over to KFOR, American and German soldiers ransacked Serbian houses, apartments, shops, schools, students' dormitories, even children's clinics and Red Cross warehouses. Particularly brutal were the American members of KFOR: they broke doors, school benches and lockers, they even vandalized a lab. There were ethnic Albanians among them, allegedly as guides or translators. This brutality proved entirely fruitless, except for the havoc and enormous material damage left in its train.

The raid had been pre-planned. Two hundred and fifty (250) American members of KFOR came over from the Gnjilane area with a number of ethnic Albanians among them whom local residents recognized in American uniforms. A number of Albanian-language and foreign TV crews also came over from Pristina. All along, flyers in Serbian were thrown from a helicopter, calling on Serbs to hand over arms.

The most recent mistreatment of about 4,500 Serbs in Kosovska Mitrovica is yet another example of KFOR's policy of double standards, aimed at intimidating the remaining Serbs and driving them out of Kosovo and Metohija. The pretext of allegedly collecting illegal arms is a callous exercise in hypocrisy. This all the more so as the security of disarmed Serbs depends entirely on the protection of KFOR and UNMIK, which have failed miserably to carry out that obligation.

On the other hand, KFOR and UNMIK have not carried out the key provision of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) and the Military-Technical Agreement to demilitarize and disarm "KLA" terrorists. Under the protection of KFOR and UNMIK, they continue to arm themselves and carry out terrorist acts without impunity in wanton disregard of Security Council resolution 1160 (1998) of 31 March 1998, while their leaders claim that the so-called "Kosovo Protection Corps" ("KPC") is an embryo of a future ethnic Albanian army in Kosovo and Metohija. Since the deployment of KFOR and UNMIK in mid-June 1999, terror and violence in Kosovo and Metohija have increased 11-fold: 4,249 terrorist attacks have been committed mainly against the Serbs and other non-Albanians, in which 889 persons have been killed, 784 wounded and 834 abducted. Ethnic Albanian terrorist separatists have also destroyed thousands of Serbian homes, 82 Orthodox churches and monasteries, as well as a large number of monuments to stalwarts of Serbian culture and history.

Following the recent deterioration of the situation in Kosovska Mitrovica, I have been instructed by my Government to lodge the strongest protest and to request the Security Council to take urgent measures to normalize the situation in that town, as well as to put an immediate end to ethnic Albanian terror and vandalism and to prevent the lynchings and liquidations of Serbs and other non-Albanians, which could result in unforeseeable consequences.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Vladislav JOVANOVIC
Chargé d'affaires a.i.